

Upper Escondido Creek Watershed Exotic Species Control Program Proposed Supplemental Environmental Project

The Escondido Creek Watershed suffers from degradation of the natural tributary system as a result of extensive urbanization exacerbating runoff rates and peak discharge velocities, channelization of several segments of the drainage system, and infestation of many drainage courses by dense exotic vegetation, thus increasing channel roughness and forcing diversion of higher velocity flows around major obstructions. All of these factors have contributed to increased channel erosion and elevated rates of sediment transport down the tributary system towards San Elijo Lagoon.

The Escondido Research and Technology Center has been cited for discharge of sediment into the waters of Escondido Creek as a result of construction stormwater management violations. As a Supplemental Environmental Project (SEP) that benefits resources that may be adversely impacted by sediment discharge, the proposed program would provide for the development and partial implementation of strategy to control invasive exotic vegetation within the upper Escondido Creek watershed. Lower watershed areas are already being targeted by aggressive exotic species control efforts.

This strategy would follow a similar program developed for the Otay River Watershed to address extensive infestations of Giant Reed (*Arundo donax*) and Tamarisk (*Tamarix* spp.). A copy of this plan has been separately provided to Board staff.

The exotic species control program would be developed and partially implemented in accordance with the following tasks:

- 1) Draft Work Plan:** Under this task, a work plan would be prepared that provides a detailed outline of the elements to be completed through the course of the program. This plan would include an identification of the schedules, milestones, and tracking program for each task to be completed. This task would be conducted within 45 days of Board action authorizing the SEP. The work plan would be subject to Board staff review as a reimbursed expense by JRMC.
- 2) Final Work Plan:** Under this task the work plan would be finalized after receipt and consideration of comments from Board staff.
- 3) Draft Invasive Exotic Species Control Plan (IESCP):** This task would result in the preparation of a detailed exotic species control plan similar to that prepared for the Otay River Watershed (see Attachment A table of contents for Otay plan). The plan would include an inventory of major infestation areas within the watershed drainage system, an identification and prioritization of those that are of greatest concern, and an action plan for control of infestations. It is anticipated that the action plan for Escondido Creek will follow a similar top-down approach

outlined for the Otay River Watershed. This process allows for multiple efforts to be initiated simultaneously above drainage forks with downstream areas that are subject to recurrent infestations being deferred until upper watershed sources are curtailed. This IESCP will guide the implementation actions under this SEP and may be used to guide activities funded by other sources. The Draft plan will be subject to Board staff review as a reimbursed expense by JRMC.

- 4) **Final Invasive Exotic Species Control Plan:** Under this task the invasive species control plan would be finalized after receipt and consideration of comments from Board staff.
- 5) **Implementation of Invasive Exotic Species Control Plan:** This task addresses the use of remaining SEP funds to implement actions as directed under the IESCP. It is not anticipated that all actions outlined under the IESCP may be completed with the SEP funds available. However, funds remaining within the SEP will be directed in the systematic order required by law and the IESCP to implement actions to control exotic species within the watershed. The removal of exotic species would be conducted in a manner that follows the priorities and sequencing called for in the IESCP. Regular quarterly reports on program status, expenditures, future planned actions, and progress will be made to the Board. Board staff review and comment are to be a reimbursed expense of JRMC. It is anticipated that implementation work under this SEP will require approximately two years to complete.

Budget and Schedule

It is anticipated that the SEP funding available to this program will be \$262,500, a greater funding amount could be used since the implementation of exotics control will only be partially funded and is thus a scalable task under this SEP.

The anticipated allocation of SEP funds is outlined in Table 1. In addition, Board staff oversight cost reimbursement is proposed based on the anticipated review and comment appropriate to the scale of the task.

Table 1. Anticipated cost allocation for Escondido Creek Invasive Exotic Species Control Program
SEP

Task	Cost	Cost Reimb.
Draft Work Plan	\$2,500	\$1,000
Final Work Plan	\$1,000	\$500
Draft Invasive Exotic Species Control Plan	\$75,000	\$2,000
Final Invasive Exotic Species Control Plan	\$5,000	\$500
Implementation of Invasive Exotic Species Control Plan	\$179,000	\$4,000
TOTAL	\$262,500	\$8,000

ATTACHMENT A:

OTAY RIVER WATERSHED Tamarisk and Giant Reed Control Program

Merkel & Associates, Inc.
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